

Message Text

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SUBJECT: USSR ATOMIC POWER PROGRAM

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1. SUMMARY: RECENT TASS VESTNIK ARTICLE REPORTED THAT BY THE YEAR 2000 SOVIET SPECIALISTS EXPECT THAT 30-35 PERCENT OF TOTAL USSR ELECTRICAL GENERATING CAPACITY WILL BE IN ATOMIC POWER INSTALLATIONS. ANOTHER ARTICLE, HOWEVER, INDICATES THAT CONSTRUCTION OF THE VOLGODONSK HEAVY ENGINEERING PLANT, WHOSE PRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR GENERATORS IS TO CONTRIBUTE SUBSTANTIALLY TO PLANNED INCREASES IN ATOMIC POWER OUTPUT, IS CONTINUING TO ENCOUNTER SERIOUS PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. TASS ECONOMIC VESTNIK OF AUGUST 30 CARRIED AN ARTICLE WHICH CENTERED ON THE LONG-TERM PROSPECTS FOR CREATING AN ALL-EUROPEAN POWER GRID WHOSE SOURCES WOULD CENTER IN SIBERIAN POWER STATIONS AND WHICH COULD INVOLVE WESTERN PARTICIPATION. THE ITEM BEGAN, HOWEVER, BY REPORTING THAT SOVIET SPECIALISTS CALCULATE THAT BY
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THE YEAR 2000, 30-35 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL USSR ELECTRICAL GENERATING

CAPACITY WILL BE IN ATOMIC POWER INSTALLATIONS. EVEN AT THIS LEVEL, ATOMIC POWER IS NOT EXPECTED TO MEET THE GROWTH IN ENERGY DEMAND.

3. THE VESTNIK ARTICLE NOTING THE NUCLEAR POWER PROJECTIONS FOR THE YEAR 2000 STANDS IN CONTRAST TO AN ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN SOTSIALISTICHESKAYA INDUSTRIYA ON SEPTEMBER 2 POINTING OUT ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS IN CONSTRUCTION OF THE VOLGODONSK HEAVY ENGINEERING PLANT WHICH IS TO PRODUCE LARGE NUMBERS OF NUCLEAR REACTORS TO HELP REACH PROJECTED GOALS FOR SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASING ATOMIC POWER GENERATING CAPACITY (REFTELS). THE LATTER ARTICLE, WRITTEN BY A ROSTOVSK OBLAST PARTY FUNCTIONARY, G. MARTYSENKO, REPORTS THAT MORE THAN 16,000 CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE NOW ENGAGED ON THE PROJECT AND ONE-HALF MILLION RUBLES PER DAY OF WORK IS BEING FULFILLED. A CEMENT PLANT AND HOUSING CONSTRUCTION COMBINE ARE NOW IN PRODUCTION, THE OUTER WALLS OF THE AUXILIARY SHOPS ARE COMPLETED, A THERMAL POWER STATION IS BEING BUILT, AND THE FRAME OF THE MAIN FACTORY INSTALLATION IS BEING "ASSEMBLED".

3. ACCORDING TO MARTYSENKO, SEVERAL PROBLEMS ALSO EXIST BEGINNING WITH DELAYS IN START-UP OF THE INITIAL PLANTS AND LACK OF COORDINATION AND POOR QUALITY WORK BY SUB-CONTRACTORS, PARTICULARLY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND ELECTRIFICATION. THE MOST PRESSING PROBLEM, HOWEVER, IS HOUSING SHORTAGES. THE AUXILIARY SHOPS ARE TO BE READY FOR OPERATION BY DECEMBER BUT EQUIPMENT ORDERS WERE LATE AND GOSSNAB HAS NOT YET ALLOCATED FUNDS FOR 150 METAL-CUTTING MACHINES, FORGE-PRESS MACHINERY, ELECTRIC FURNACES, AND CRANES. OTHER EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN DELAYED IN DELIVERY. WORK IN ORGANIZING AND TRAINING SPECIALISTS IS DEFICIENT. AND OUTPUT SCHEDULES BOTH FOR THE AUXILIARY PLANTS AND THE MAIN FACILITY HAVE NOT YET BEEN PREPARED.

4. COMMENT: WE HAD NOT RECENTLY SEEN ANY PUBLISHED SOVIET ESTIMATES OF THE SHARE OF ATOMIC ENERGY IN TOTAL USSR POWER GENERATING CAPACITY OVER THE LONG-TERM AND WERE THUS STRUCK BY THE LARGE PERCENTAGES NOTED IN THE VESTNIK ARTICLE. AT THE END OF 1975, NUCLEAR POWER PLANT CAPACITY IN THE USSR WAS ONLY 2 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL POWER PLANT CAPACITY. AND THE LATEST REPORT UNCLASSIFIED

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ON THE VOLGODONSK PLANT PRESENTS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT SOVIET PLANS FOR INCREASING ATOMIC POWER OUTPUT MAY BE TOO AMBITIOUS. THAT PLANT WAS TO HAVE MADE A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE GOAL OF CONSTRUCTION 15,000 MEGAWATTS OF NEW NUCLEAR GENERATING CAPACITY DURING THE TENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1976-80).
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